

**Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure**

**Fledglings Montessori**
**last update January 2025**

**1. Introduction**

At Fledglings Montessori Preschool, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in our care. We aim to provide a safe, secure, and stimulating environment where children can thrive, feel safe, and are protected from harm, neglect, and abuse. Our Safeguarding Children Policy is in line with the latest legislation and guidelines.

**2. Aims**

* To ensure that all staff, parents, and volunteers understand their role in safeguarding children.
* To promote a culture where safeguarding is a priority.
* To provide a clear and consistent procedure for reporting concerns about a child's safety.
* To ensure children feel safe and supported within the setting.
* To educate children about safety and how to protect themselves.

**3. Safeguarding Principles**

* **Child-Centred Approach**: The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions.
* **Prevention**: We aim to create an environment that reduces the likelihood of abuse and promotes a culture of safety.
* **Partnership**: We work together with parents, professionals, and local authorities to safeguard children.
* **Empowerment**: Children are encouraged to voice their concerns and be listened to.

**4. Definition of Safeguarding**

Safeguarding involves:

* Protecting children from maltreatment.
* Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development.
* Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
* Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**5. Types of Abuse**

The following categories of abuse are recognised:

* **Physical Abuse**: Hitting, shaking, burning, or inflicting harm to the child.
* **Emotional Abuse**: Constantly threatening, rejecting, or isolating a child.
* **Sexual Abuse**: Any form of sexual activity or exploitation.
* **Neglect**: The failure to meet a child’s basic needs, such as food, shelter, and supervision.

**6. Staff Responsibilities**

* Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sue Delaney ( DSL ). The Preschool has a designated person responsible for safeguarding concerns within the preschool, and their contact details.
* **Deputy DSL:** A secondary person trained to handle safeguarding concerns in the absence of the primary DSL. (Emma Brewer)
* **Staff Responsibilities:** All staff understand their role in safeguarding, including recognising signs of abuse, reporting concerns, and following procedures.

 **7. Child Protection Procedures**

* **Recognising Abuse:** Staff understand and recognise the different types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), and their signs, and symptoms.
* **Reporting Concerns:** Staff will report any concerns about a child’s welfare or safety to the DSL.
* **Confidentiality:** All confidential information will be handled sensitively, ensuring it is shared only with relevant agencies (e.g., social services or police).
* **Action if a Disclosure is Made:** All staff aware of how to respond if a child discloses abuse (e.g., stay calm, listen carefully, reassure them, don’t promise confidentiality).
* **Referral Process:** All staff to be aware of procedures for referring a case to local safeguarding agencies if necessary.

**8. Safer Recruitment Practices**

* **Recruitment Process:** The preschool ensures all staff, volunteers, and regular visitors are safely recruited (e.g., enhanced DBS checks, references, and interviews).
* **Training:** All staff receive mandatory safeguarding training before working with children and on an ongoing basis.
* **Induction Process:** We will ensure all new staff, students, and volunteers understand our safeguarding policy and procedures upon joining.

 **9. Staff Training and Awareness**

* **Training Program:** All staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, including induction training, refresher courses, and regular updates.
* **Awareness:** The preschool will ensure staff are aware of the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and the reporting mechanisms.

 **10.Online Safety**

* **Online Safety Policy:** The preschool will ensure children are protected from online risks, including supervision and teaching children about online safety.
1. **Partnership with Parents and Carers**
* **Parent Communication:** The policy will be shared with parents at the start of the child’s attendance and be readily available for review.
* **Working with Parents:** The preschool will encourage open communication with parents, while keeping them informed of any concerns about a child’s welfare.

1. **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**
* **Information Sharing:** We will share information sharing with relevant authorities such as local authorities, the police, and other safeguarding bodies.
* **Confidentiality:** Information shared will be kept confidential unless there is a concern for the safety and welfare of the child.
1. **Complaints and Allegations Against Staff**
* **Handling Allegations:** All staff to understand and follow procedures for handling allegations against staff members or volunteers, including the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
* **Investigations:** The preschool will investigate all complaints and allegations, and the preschool will support both the child and the accused staff member during the process until an outcome is reached.
1. **Monitoring and Review**
* **Policy Review:** The safeguarding policy will be reviewed at least annually or whenever there is a change in legislation or practice.
* **Regular Audits:** The preschool will conduct regular safeguarding audits to ensure procedures are followed and that the environment remains safe for all children.
1. **Risk Assessment**
* **Assessing Risks:** The preschool has procedures in place to identify and minimise risks to children, both in the physical environment and in activities.
1. **External Safeguarding Links**
* **Local Authority:** The preschool is familiar with local safeguarding procedures and how to access local resources.
* **Ofsted and Other Agencies:** Staff are made aware when to contact Ofsted and other agencies that may support safeguarding, including emergency contacts.

**17. Equal Opportunities**

* **Inclusive Safeguarding:** We will ensure that safeguarding measures are inclusive and appropriate for all children, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, or background.

**Conclusion**

The **Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures** ensures the preschool adheres to the legal and ethical framework for child protection and safeguarding. It provides clear guidelines for recognising and acting upon concerns regarding the welfare of children, while fostering a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

**Key Documents for Reference:**

**The Children Act 1989 and 2004**

**Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**

**Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)**

**The Prevent Duty (2015)**

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

**Ofsted’s Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements**

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated according to changes in legislation, best practice, and the needs of the children in the preschool's care.

Last Updated January 25

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